



The Weekly Wrap Up

February 10, 2006

From Viola Miller, Tennessee's Commissioner for
The Department of Children's Services

Entering the Fleet Feet Home Stretch

Our DCS runaway recovery bliz – Operation Fleet Feet — enters its final week. The investigators have worked extremely hard and have been incredibly successful.

As we enter the final week, we have asked all case managers to revisit the home of any youth on AWOL and report their findings to the Fleet Feet team. We are also asking that case managers join the team for the final few days to assist with OFF.

This opportunity will also be a good one for learning the strategies to recover our children when they run away.

Of course, the absconder unit will continue, but each of us will have a responsibility to preventing and recovering our youth who abscond. I have learned a great deal by reading your reports and communicating with you about our youth.

I have been impressed by your thoughtful and caring concern for these young people. I appreciate your diligence in quickly convening a CFT for returning youth, for debriefing the incidents to determine prevention strategies and for enlisting the support and cooperation of our private providers. Thank you.

Let's all support OFF during this final week.

Remember our bulls-eye: No more than 12 months to reunification; no more than 24 months to adoption. That's our goal. That's what's right for our children. Let's turn up the heat.

VIOLA P. MILLER

Runaway Tips

For those who may have missed it earlier, here's a recap of some tips gleaned from a recent DCS study of runaway cases. It's based on a random sample of 20 youths who ran from state custody.

- Involve teens in case planning, permanency planning, team building, and every other decision-making strategy. If they are not a part of the planning process, then they don't have an incentive to follow the plan that is developed. Help them understand why custody is necessary.
- Help connect teens with caring adults even if they are not placement options. Also help teens develop realistic relationships with their biological families through counseling, family services, and coping skills.
- Encourage and support positive connections with peers.
- Encourage resource parents, mentors, contract agencies, and other agencies to engage the child in planning his or her treatment, discipline strategies, and responsibilities.
- Respond to concerns identified by resource families, contract agencies, mentors, or other adults involved in a young person's life before situations escalate to disruption or runaway.
- Do not allow contract agencies to withhold contact with family or other appropriate caring adults from youth. These connections are necessary for some youth to not only feel safe themselves but to know that people they care most about are okay.
- When youth return from runaway, let them know that they were missed and that DCS is going to try to do better to make them feel safe this time. Then listen to and follow up on what they have to say.

Praise Be

A Young Life in Turnaround

On Feb. 9, 2005, G.G. was adjudicated delinquent with felony charges and placed in State's Custody. He was sent to Freewill Baptist Ministries, a Level 2 facility and completed this program in a timely fashion with no

negative incidents. He was awarded a Trial Home Pass on August 25 and successfully completed with no incidents.

He remained on Aftercare and went to school at Science Hill Alternative to aid him in matriculating to regular high school. While at the Alternative school, GG was a model student according to the principal and moved to the regular high school where again he is noted as a model student. GG's mother has two other children and she struggles to keep her family together.

Of GG's own volition, he started working at a local cafeteria with his mother every day after school. He bought himself a bicycle, and rides this to school every day and to work every afternoon. He owed \$620.06 to the court for restitution and court costs.

Again, of his volition, he paid on his restitution faithfully and helps his mother to provide for the family. G. has paid his restitution in full, continues to work to help his mother and is an A and B student at his high school. He was successfully discharged on Jan. 30

In summary, this Probation Officer feels G. has really made great strides, took the responsibility himself, and of his volition, paid all his restitution. He is a fine young man who has turned his life around, and I feel he deserves recognition.

Respectfully,
Gayle Jones

Juvenile Justice Staff Mixes It Up at Fall Creek Falls

Regional Justice Coordinators Named

On January 17-20, 2006 the DCS Juvenile Justice Division held their Winter Retreat at Fall Creek Falls State Park. There were more than 60 staff members in attendance, representing the youth detention centers, group homes, regional staffers and central office.

JJ Staff were placed in groups of teams with people they did not know and they stayed with this group throughout the retreat. This provided an opportunity to learn about different areas of the state and what their counterparts were doing in those areas. The consensus was that this was a great way to meet new people, put names with faces and have interaction with people within the different spectrums of the division.

Along with the group interactions the entire group had the opportunity to hear from nationally known experts on the topics of “Evidenced-based Programming” by James “Buddy” Howell – formerly with Office of Juvenile Justice Programs (OJJDP) and “Changing Youth Corrections” by Orlando Martinez – former Commissioner of Georgia Dept. of Juvenile Justice.

Other speakers included, Dr. Susan McGuire (Valley Hospital), Steven C. Hornsby (Structured Decision-Making) and our own Commissioner Miller.

A highlight of the retreat was the announcement of the Juvenile Justice Regional Coordinators. This team will act as a conduit between Central Office and their regions in the dissemination of information from Nashville. They will also assist Technical Assistance and Training as new initiatives come to be.

The Juvenile Justice Regional Coordinators are:

- Shelby: Marvin Chaney
 - Davidson: Johnny Stewart
 - Hamilton: Jackie Thomas
 - Southeast: Leeann Hayes
 - Knox: David Reeves
 - Southwest: Celeste Henry
 - Upper Cumberland: Angela C. Smith
 - South Central: David Hopper
 - Northwest: John Martin
 - Northeast: Pam Harr
 - East: Rosa Webb
 - Mid-Cumberland: Crystal Guess
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Core Leadership Minutes

Tom Riche, Presiding. January 31, 2006

Leveling CANS (Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths): Dr. John Lyons

Dr. Lyons, of Northwestern University, stated he is in the process of developing a Tennessee version of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Tool with DCS to support primary decision-making. CANS is an objective tool to help with quality of and success of children and families. A meeting was held on January 30, 2006, with several Central Office staff to discuss implementation of this tool. Dr. Lyons and DCS began to look at the tool itself to see what are the important decisions to be made about children. We will be shifting the focus from management of services to the management of children.

Basic Structure of CANS:

It is a collection of items and it is designed to be a tool for service planning and action planning. The tool is comprised of needs and strengths each with four levels designed to translate into action steps/levels.

Needs

0 = no action

1 = watchful waiting/prevention

2 = action

3 = immediate action

Strengths

0 = centerpiece strength

1 = strength to use

2 = strength identified but building is needed

3 = no strength

There are anchored definitions for each item and there are action items for each item. The strengths are set the same way. Training for administering the cans is simple and takes about 4 or 5 hours. It is not required that a person be a licensed clinician to administer the CANS.

Total Outcome Clinical Management:

DCS has chosen to implement the CANS as a decision support model, which recommends a particular level or type of program to the child and family team, which may accept or override the recommendation. This differs from an “eligibility” model which is focused on meeting criteria to be eligible for services. This can be appealed and we want to de-emphasize linking it to payment because DCS has chosen to use outcomes data from Chapin Hall in order to compensate providers in terms of performance-based outcomes. As we ask providers to improve time to permanency and to support stability of placement, we need to be careful about affecting their rates at the same time. Both are focused on quality. Performance based contracting allows for reinvestment strategy. Chapin Hall data examines how providers do with all outcomes. CANS provide child specific data and which children are doing better in different programs and supports evidenced based practice.

Next Steps:

We will begin piloting CANS in Rutherford County and Knox County in the next few months

July - December 2006 - CANS will be used for children coming into care.

January 2007 - CANS will be used for children coming into care

January 1, 2007, we would have a revised level system that will be CANS based and simple to understand.

Juvenile Justice Pilot Program:

A pilot using the Youth Level of Services is focused on issues related to Juvenile Justice children. The Case Management Inventory pilot will be in West Tennessee before statewide implementation. The focus of the pilot will be on the regional and institutional level. We need to determine the level of risk for the community first for our Juvenile Justice children. There may be some special needs for some absconders. We have to make risk assessment determination and then look at other responsibilities if they do not require a secure placement. Bonnie Hommrich expressed concern about having two different leveling systems for private providers.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: John Birdsong

Mr. Birdsong is the Executive Director of the Title VI program. The governing body is composed of 13 members, 9 citizens, 2 State Representatives, and 2 State Senators for the Commission. Mr. Birdsong leads the Commission and provides technical assistance for agencies. Title VI is one of the most important sections of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This act is a national policy regarding discrimination for all programs that receive federal funding. We are still working toward insuring discriminatory practices do not occur. In 1992, the Legislature put state agencies on notice about Title VI. Agencies' compliance with Title VI was examined regarding federal regulations about federal assistance. The Comptroller's office conducted a study and found agencies were aware of Title VI, but were not up to speed. A statute was passed that requiring all state government agencies to submit a Title VI implementation plan with Comptroller each year by June 30. If an agency receives federal funds each year, there is more of a role of monitoring to ensure your sub-recipients also comply with Title VI, implement a plan, etc. The Comptroller asks Title VI questions during their Sunset audits of agencies and reports back to the Joint Government Operations Committee.

Title VI involves people protected under the law as well as public policy planning.

1987 Civil Rights Restoration Act

Restored broad coverage of Title VI to any programs that received federal funding.

Termination of funding is the ultimate penalty for non-compliance, but all agencies have opportunities for corrective action plans.